



SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION NEWS

United We Stand



TOMPKINS COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
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Inside This Issue

- **Ithaca Youngster Wins Coloring Contest** (cover)
- **Tire Collection Photo** (cover) **Agricultural Assmt.** (cover)
- **2011 Conservation Farm of the Year and Other...**(pg. 2)
- **Welcomes & Goodbyes** (pg. 2) **Spring Fish Stocking** (pg. 2)
- **Our Newsletter Sponsors** (pg. 3)
- **NRCS Announcements & Sign-ups** (pg. 4)
- **County Stream & Bridge Protection** (pg. 4)
- **USC Cover Crop Initiative Brings Answers...**(pg. 5)
- **Conservation Practices and Farming Surveys in...**(pg. 5)
- **Items for Sale** (back pg.) **District Information** (back pg.)

2012 TREE SALE ORDER FORM INSET ENCLOSED!

Ithaca Youngster Wins State Coloring Contest

By: Seth Dennis, Education Coordinator

3-year old Lily Wang of Ithaca was the 2011 winner of the Ronny Raindrop Coloring Contest for the 0-5 age group. The contest is held every year at the New York State Fair at the Soil & Water Conservation District booth in the Horticulture Building. Ronny Raindrop is the New York State Soil & Water Conservation District's mascot, and has a new coloring sheet for children every year at the booth for age groups 0-5, 6-8, and 9-12. Lily will be receiving a check for \$25.00, Certificate of Achievement, and her winning coloring sheet will be framed and on display at the 2012 Soil & Water Conservation District booth at the NY State Fair. The prize was awarded by the New York State Conservation District Employees Association, and the Tompkins County Soil & Water Conservation District. Congratulations Lily!



A scene from the Town of Caroline Highway Department—Tompkins County Soil & Water Conservation District hosted a Tire Collection Day on October 15th, 2011 and collected over 800 tires to be recycled. From left to right, SWCD staff include Seth Dennis, Jon Negley, Aaron Ristow, Craig Schutt, and Gene Aarnio.

Agricultural Assessments

By: Jon Negley, Conservation Technician

The Tompkins County SWCD is continuing to accept requests for soil group worksheets in conjunction with the 2012 Agricultural Exemption application filed with the Tompkins County Assessment office. All owners of land who meet the eligibility requirements set by the State Department of Ag and Markets are able to file for this exemption. Once it is determined that you qualify for an agricultural exemption the first step will be to call the Tompkins County SWCD office and request a Soil Group Worksheet. We will then prepare a worksheet and associated map that will delineate your soil types, woodlands and any land that is not eligible (i.e. – residences and yards). This will be completed at a fee of \$35.00 for new worksheets or any changes to an existing worksheet. This will then be attached to your application form RP-305 or RP-305-r which is filed with the Tompkins County Assessment office.

The deadline for submission of this form is April 1, 2012 so please get your requests for Soil Group Worksheets in earlier than this date. For more information on this program and to determine whether you are eligible for this exemption please visit <http://www.orps.state.ny.us/pamphlet/exempt/agassess.htm> or call the Tompkins County assessment office at 607-274-5517.

2011 Conservation Farm of the Year and Other Award Winners

By: Seth Dennis, Education Coordinator

The Tompkins County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) hosted an Appreciation and Recognition Luncheon on Friday, September 16th at the Carey Farm in Groton. The major award winners were as follows;

"Conservation Farm of the Year" – Snow Top Farm, Ray & Alan Van De Bogart

"Conservation Leadership Award" – Senator James L. Seward

"Contractor Award" – Jeff Benthin of JB's Excavating

"Conservation Citizen Award" – Barry Goodrich

"Education Sponsorship Award" – Cargill Deicing Technologies

"Municipal Partner Award" – Cindy Schulte of the Stormwater Coalition of Tompkins County

The Tompkins County SWCD presented AEM (Agricultural Environmental Management) Farm Signs to;

Ray & Alan Van De Bogart – Snow Top Farm

Ed & Eileen Scheffler – Scheffler Farm

Jason, Joe & Chris Fuller – Fuller Family Dairy

Larry & Denise Moore

Tom & Sally Brown

Paul & Laura Fouts – Fouts Farm

The Luncheon had just over 60 people in attendance with guest speakers Senator James L. Seward, Senator Thomas F. O'Mara, Terre Dennis - Congressman Richard Hanna's Cortland Regional Director, and the Tompkins County Dairy Princess - Abbie Teeter. It was also attended by members of the Tompkins County Administration, Tompkins County Legislature, Farm Bureau, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Farm Service Agency, Tompkins County Soil & Water Conservation District Board of Directors, local teachers, Town Supervisors & Highway Superintendents, and county farmers. The event was sponsored by the Tompkins County Soil & Water Conservation District and the Tompkins County Farm Bureau, and hosted at the Carey Farm in Groton owned by Dan and Ann Carey.



Welcomes and Goodbyes

Welcome:

The Tompkins County Soil & Water Conservation District welcomes Angel Dybas. Angel started her position as Conservation Resource Specialist in August. She joins the District after spending the last 4.5 years as a Stormwater Specialist with Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County. Angel graduated from SUNY Geneseo with her BS in Biology and the University of Wisconsin – Green Bay with her MS in Environmental Science and Policy. Prior to starting her career, she held internships with the NYS Department of Health, Wisconsin Department of Transportation, Green Bay Water Utility, and the US EPA (Andrew W. Breidenbach Environmental Research Center – Cincinnati, OH). As a hiker and outdoors person, Angel is enjoying all the recreational opportunities that exist in Tompkins County.

The Tompkins County Soil & Water Conservation District welcomes Teresa Burch. Teresa has recently started her new position as the Tompkins County SWCD Secretary/Treasurer. She joins the District after spending the last 14 years at Pall Trinity Micro where she worked in Accounting for 13 years, and on the shop floor for 1 year. She graduated from Dryden High School and has an AAS degree in Accounting from TC3 and a BS degree in Business Administration from Empire State College. She and her husband have been married for 29 years and have 2 sons. Teresa lives in Groton on Old Stage Road in the family home they bought from her Grandparents. Her favorite past times are, reading, crocheting, walking the dogs and gardening.

The staff at the Tompkins County SWCD are sad to say goodbye to our secretary/treasurer for the past year, Jen Case. Jen has moved on to a new position as the Bookkeeper/Personnel Officer for the Town of Dryden. Good luck to her and her new job, she will be missed!

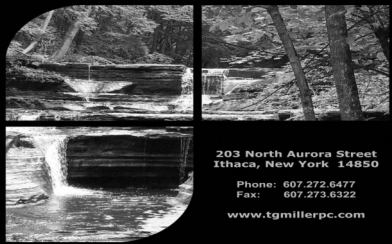


Spring Fish Stocking

Every year around late March to early April the Tompkins SWCD helps the NYS DEC stock local creeks with thousands of Brown Trout. This is a put and take fishery which means that most of the fish that are stocked each year get fished out by local and regional fishermen. In order to keep this practice going, volunteers are needed to distribute hatchery raised fish up and down streams from various points that the stocking truck will stop at. If you are interested in helping with the effort please contact the office at 257-2340. We will give you some information about the events along with specific dates and locations as the time gets closer. This is a "kid friendly" event!

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Soil & Water Conservation Districts
in New York State



Providing Today, Protecting Tomorrow



WINTER NEWSLETTER 2012

ITEMS FOR SALE AT THE **SWCD OFFICE**

- BLUEBIRD BOXES \$ 15.12 *
- BAT ROOSTING BOXES 18.36 *
- WOOD DUCK BOXES - PINE 43.20 *
- KESTREL/SCREECH OWL BOXES 29.16 *
- RAIN BARRELS 59.40 *
- FERTILIZER TABLETS15/EACH
- MARKING FLAGS VARIES
- TREE PROTECTORS - AVAILABLE AT TREE ORDER TIME ONLY, CALL FOR PRICE
- RAIN GAUGES 14.04 *
- NYS STANDARDS & SPECIFICATIONS FOR EROSION &
SEDIMENT CONTROL. 70.00
- NY CONTRACTORS EROSION AND SEDIMENT CONTROL FIELD NOTEBOOK
35.00
- SOIL GROUP WORKSHEETS - NEW 35.00
- REVISED 35.00
- TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS 7.00*
- TREE & SHRUB PROGRAM VARIES
- FISH STOCKING PROGRAM VARIES
- BARLEY STRAW (PER BALE) VARIES
- GIFT CARDS ANY AMOUNT!

* 8 % SALES TAX INCLUDED



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Alan Teeter Grange
Frank Proto County Legislator
Pat Pryor County Legislator

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Craig Schutt Conservation District Manager
Teresa Burch District Secretary/Treasurer
Angel Dybas Resource Cons. Specialist
Gene Aarnio Grazing Technician
Seth Dennis Education Coordinator
Jon Negley Conservation Technician
Aaron Ristow Natural Resources Program Specialist/
Ag-Team Coordinator (USC)

USDA-NRCS

Patrick Barry District Conservationist
(Schuyler & Tompkins Counties)
Lori Beach Civil Engineer Technician (Area III)
Josh Hornesky Soil Conservationist

***Board meetings are held monthly on the 2nd
Monday at 12:30 P.M. in the District office. The
public is always invited.***

Tompkins County Soil & Water Conservation District
1771 Hanshaw Road
Ithaca, NY 14850

Phone 607-257-2340 Fax 607-257-7896

www.tcsxcd.org

The Tompkins County Soil & Water Conservation District and the Natural Resources Conservation Service prohibit discrimination in all their programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status.

NRCS Natural Resources Conservation Service

Signup NOW for Conservation Programs!

By Josh Hornesky, Soil Conservationist, NRCS

The Ithaca Field office is just starting to get bits and pieces of information related to conservation program signup for 2012. If you have not yet submitted an application, now is the time to do so! Currently, we know there will be three new centralized initiatives taking place: (1) Organic, (2) Seasonal High Tunnel, and (3) Energy.

The organic initiative helps certified organic growers and producers transitioning to organic certification install conservation practices for organic production. New for fiscal year 2012, applicants will be evaluated continuously during the ranking periods. Applications meeting or exceeding a threshold score may be approved for an EQIP contract before the end of the ranking period. The first ranking ends February 3, 2011. Applications whose ratings are below the threshold score will be deferred to the next period. A new threshold score will be established at the beginning of each ranking period. This new scoring process allows organic producers to implement conservation practices in a timelier manner.

The seasonal high tunnel initiative helps producers plan and implement high tunnels, which are steel-framed, polyethylene covered structures that extend growing seasons in an environmentally safe manner. High tunnel benefits include better plant and soil quality and fewer nutrients and pesticides in the environment. To date, the Ithaca field office has funded five high tunnels. The first ranking for this initiative ends on February 3, 2011.

The energy initiative helps producers develop Agricultural Energy Management Plans (AgEMP) or farm energy audits that assess energy consumption on an operation. NRCS then uses audit data to develop energy conservation recommendations. There are two AgEMP components. The first is a landscape component that assesses equipment and farming processes. The second is a farm headquarters component that assesses power usage and efficiencies in livestock buildings, grain handling operations, and similar facilities to support the farm operation. The first ranking period for this initiative also ends on February 3, 2011.

Also likely to be available this year will be the three major focus areas under the Environmental Quality Incentives Program. This is where most of New York State EQIP dollars are spent (over \$10 million last year). These three focus areas include: (1) Livestock Waste, (2) Cropland, and (3) Grazing. Livestock Waste practices include manure storage, barnyards, silage leachate, and composting just to name a few. Cropland practices include cover crops, strip-cropping, diversions, grassed waterways, and reduced tillage as well as other practices. Grazing practices include fencing, riparian buffers, and watering systems and a few other practices.

It's anticipated the forest component of EQIP will also return. Those producers interested in managing their forest lands according to a stewardship are encouraged to apply. The most common eligible practices include thinning, invasive species control, and treating erosion on forest trails though there are a couple of other available practices.

Finally, if you are interested in any of our wildlife programs that include the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP), or Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) contact the field office to sign up. For more information on these programs and other initiatives mentioned above please visit <http://www.ny.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/>.

County Stream & Bridge Protection

By Jon Negley, Conservation Technician

Working with the Tompkins County Highway Department in the last quarter of 2011, the Tompkins County SWCD helped to design and install a couple of stream stabilization projects around County bridges and highways. These projects improved infrastructure, water quality and residential properties. Using various techniques, from large stone to grass vegetation, we were able to stabilize the stream banks and protect the house or bridge that was impacted by it. These projects can be seen in the Town of Lansing at the Salmon Creek Road Bridge, and in the Town of Caroline at the Boiceville Road Bridge and Central Chapel Road. Money for these projects came from the NYSDEC.



USC Cover Crop Initiative Brings Answers to Producer's Questions in New York

By: Aaron Ristow, Natural Resources Prog. Specialist, Ag-Team Coordinator (USC)

Cover crops are being used on farms in our region to minimize erosion, maximize nutrient uptake in the fall, improve soil health, and increase organic matter and field trafficability. As fertilizer prices continue to increase and producers aim to reduce nitrogen (N) loss to the environment, they are asking about the benefits of cover crops for corn silage systems.

To begin addressing these questions and with the aim of stimulating cover crop implementation on corn silage acres in New York, the Upper Susquehanna Coalition (USC) of 16 Conservation Districts is piloting a Cover Crop Initiative through an interactive outreach approach sponsored by a Conservation Innovation Grant from the New York Natural Resources Conservation Service. The project approach is to engage farmers and extension agents to develop and deliver information on the economic and environmental benefits of cover cropping systems. If optimum corn yield can be obtained at lower N application rates following a cover crop, dairy producers may reduce costs by \$20/acre, minimize nutrient losses, and reduce reliance on fossil fuels. In addition, this project will work in conjunction with a state grant that is using a local Conservation District to test a variety of custom cover crop application methods on farmer fields to determine which one is most efficient. Outreach will include field day demonstrations and an annual workshop in November to highlight benefits and share ideas on how producers in our region are overcoming the challenges of cover crop implementation on their farms.

To find out more about the USC Cover Crop Initiative please contact, Aaron Ristow, Ag Coordinator for the USC at (607) 257-2340 or aaronristow@tcswwd.org.



Conservation Practices and Farming Surveys in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed

By: Aaron Ristow, Natural Resources Prog. Specialist, Ag-Team Coordinator (USC)

Conservation practices help farmers and rural communities in the Chesapeake Bay watershed maintain productive farmland, protect the environment and restore the health of the Bay. Over the last decade, farmers have adopted many agricultural best management practices (BMP) in the region by cost-sharing publicly available technical and financial assistance or on their own initiative and at their own expense.

Currently there are two efforts in the region to collect information about these practices and the positive impact they have on the landscape. The first effort is being led by the Upper Susquehanna Coalition of 16 county Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) in the NY portion of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. The USC is the designated data manager for agriculture conservation practices in NY and is responsible for submitting BMP data to the EPA. Data collected through your local SWCD falls under the umbrella of the Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) program. The data submitted to the EPA by the USC is kept private and aggregated to the county level, so individual farms are not identifiable. By submitting data, NY is documenting the progress its farmers are making each year toward conservation and providing the EPA with reasonable assurance that NY farmers are continuing to do the work each year to meet water quality goals. This is a major effort that has been going on for years and will continue for years to come.

The second effort is being led by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS). NASS representatives will visit 76 farms in the New York portion of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed between November 2011 and January 2012. Producers will be asked to provide information on farm production practices; chemical, fertilizer and manure applications; integrated pest management; and adopted conservation practices. As with all NASS surveys, respondents are guaranteed by law that their individual information is kept confidential. This survey, conducted by a federal agency, is completely separate from the data collected by your local SWCD and will only be occurring until the end of January.

It is important for a producer to understand that these two separate data collection efforts are being conducted in the region at the same time and that there is a chance that their farm could be visited by each agency separately during the upcoming year. The objectives for each project are different and there is not coordination between the federal agency and the local SWCD office for these visits.

For more information or questions about your local SWCD and the Upper Susquehanna Coalition please visit www.tcswwd.org. To find out more about the USDA survey, contact your local NASS Field Office or visit www.nass.usda.gov.